



1812 N. Moore Street, Suite 2200
Arlington, VA 22209

703.841.3200

April 16, 2026

Testimony of Mark Ourada
Director, State Government Affairs
National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA)

Before the Rhode Island Senate Committee on Housing and
Municipal Government

In Opposition to SB 3032
Relating to Health and Safety, State Building Code

Good afternoon Chair Britto, Vice Chair Sosnowski, and members of Senate Committee on Commerce. My name is Mark Ourada and I am a Director of State Government Affairs at the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA). I am here to speak in opposition to SB 3032 “*State Building Code*”. The bill would establish a moratorium on changes to the state energy conservation code from the 2024 International Energy Conservation Code until January 1, 2030, unless approved by the legislature and made effective by the governor.

NEMA is the leading trade organization representing America’s electroindustry. Our more than 300 manufacturing companies include producers of reliable, connected, and secure products which are used throughout critical infrastructure sectors and other key markets, such as building infrastructure; building systems; lighting systems; industrial products and systems; utility products and systems; and transportation systems. NEMA members manufacture many of the products necessary to provide electricity to Rhode Island consumers and businesses, equipment that powers electric vehicles, and products that make buildings and homes more energy efficient¹. In Rhode Island, the electroindustry supports more than 8,000 jobs and creates more than \$1.1 billion in GDP contributions².

SB 3032 would effectively move Rhode Island from a three year to a six year energy code adoption cycle, something which will prevent the state from realizing the multiple benefits of new, more efficient, and safer technologies. Rhode Island is a leader in safe and efficient building and this legislation represents a major step backwards for the state’s energy codes if adopted. We urge that you oppose this legislation.

A triennial code cycle with options for more timely updates for health and life-safety is important to ensure the full benefit of energy codes. Rhode Island, like many other states, has traditionally adopted energy codes on this triennial cycle, something which has made the state an example to follow on energy codes for the nation. Rhode Island residents have seen numerous benefits from this including lower energy usage and costs, access to the most innovative and efficient technologies, and homes built with the latest efficient building construction practices.

Fully updating energy codes also provide benefits beyond energy savings. Homes built to updated codes also improve passive survivability. Passive survivability allows homeowners to stay safely and comfortably in their homes during prolonged power outages. Limiting the ability to adopt the most updated codes could leave Rhode Islanders with more limited options during power outages from an extreme weather event.

Energy Efficiency Reduces Costs, Increases Energy Security

Energy demand in the United States is expected to increase over the coming years. Energy efficiency is the lowest cost option for curtailing this rising demand and ensuring energy security for the country, a top priority for the United States. Rhode Island can help to achieve energy security

and reduce costs for homeowners in the long run by investing in long-term energy stability through continuing to promote energy efficiency. Limiting future energy efficiency measures only increases long-term energy demand and threatens both the grid and homeowners in Rhode Island.

Energy efficiency is extremely cost effective. Proponents of limiting future energy code adoptions suggest that modern energy codes drive up home prices and building construction costs. Energy codes include flexibility and many paths for compliance, allowing for competition to achieve energy efficiency targets and reducing costs of utility bills and maintenance. The difference in costs of energy efficient construction are quickly outweighed by the reduced costs to homeowners.

Home prices are driven by a number of factors that are not guaranteed to even be impacted by energy codes, as many of these factors are completely unrelated to installation of energy efficient products. These factors include labor costs, material costs, demand, and numerous other factors.

Model codes are a floor and not a ceiling developed through an extensive transparent public process which includes input from experts from a multitude of industries, including homebuilders. Up to date energy codes will ensure Rhode Island residents receive the benefits of new and more efficient technologies that will save them significant money over the life-cycle of their homes.

NEMA supports making housing more affordable. However, we must respectfully oppose this legislation because it will have the opposite effect as intended in the long term and risk raising costs for homeowners, risk increasing energy usage at a time of already rising demand, and risk preventing manufacturers from investing in sale of the most advanced equipment in the state. A three-year energy code adoption cycle, which Rhode Island has generally followed, ensures Rhode Island residents receive the full benefits of advancing energy efficient technologies and construction methods while not having a significant cost upfront.

We thank you and your colleagues for your consideration of our concerns and request that you vote to reject SB 3032 as written.

Best regards,

Mark Ourada

Director, State Government Affairs

National Electrical Manufacturers Association

¹ Additional information about NEMA may be found at <https://www.nema.org/>.

² [Rhode Island Electroindustry Economic Report](#)